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# The Library's Legal Answer Book

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sible task of outlining the law for librarians in fewer than four hundred pages and succeeded admirably. Topics include copyright, Web page design, filters, service to patrons with disabilities, record retention, displays, professional liability, employment, and lobbying.

How do you address fully every aspect of the law for librarians? You don't. In their preface, Minow and Lipinski write that "the information in this book does not constitute legal advice, but serves as a starting point that librarians and library lawyers may use in researching the law to apply to a particular situation."

The entire book is written in a "question and answer" format. The eighty-one questions in the chapter on copyright range from "Are works published by state and local libraries copyrighted?" to "Can a library turn on the television or the radio for the public to enjoy?" The chapter "Digital Library Resources and Patrons with Disabilities" questions whether the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) applies to library digital resources, and ends with penalties a library may face if it fails to comply with the ADA. "Library Records and Privacy" ranges from the USA PATRIOT Act, to parental access to a child's library records. The answers, for the most part, are as straightforward as is possible under the circumstances—the circumstances being "how on earth can you write a one-volume book about the laws of fifty states (plus the District of Columbia) and federal law? The answer is to keep it simple. Although I found some answers to be overly technical and others a bit too simplistic, *The Library's Legal Answer Book* is a resounding success.

Over the last few years the ALA has published a variety of books on specific legal topics, including Barbara Jones' *Libraries, Access and Intellectual Freedom* (1999), Robert Peck's *Libraries, the First Amendment, and Cyberspace* (2000), Linda Wallace's *Library Advocate's Handbook* (2000), and Kenneth Crews' *Copyright Essentials for Librarians and Educators* (2000). Libraries Unlimited published Nancy Kravitz's

***The Library's Legal Answer Book.*** By Mary Minow and Tomas A. Lipinski. Chicago: ALA, 2003. 361p. \$48 (ISBN 0-8390-0828-4).

This is a really good book. Minow and Lipinski took on the near impos-

*Censorship and the School Library Media Center* (2002), and Neal-Schuman published Arlene Bielefield and Lawrence Cheeseman's *Library Facilities and the Law* (2002).

Tomas Lipinski, co-author of the book being reviewed here, edited *Libraries, Museums, and Archives: Legal Issues and Ethical Challenges in the New Information Era* (Scarecrow, 2002). With chapters by more than a dozen different authors, there is some, but not much overlap with the new *Answer Book*.

The bottom line: *The Library's Legal Answer Book* is a valuable addition to every library collection. Buy it now.—  
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